

**Testimony**  
**Senate Bill 2293 – Department of Human Services**  
**Senate Judiciary Committee**  
**Senator Nething, Chairman**  
**February 2, 2009**

Chairman Nething, members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I am Alex C. Schweitzer the Superintendent of the North Dakota State Hospital and North Dakota Developmental Center of the Department of Human Services. I am here today in support of Senate Bill 2293.

The North Dakota State Hospital has in recent years seen an increase in the admissions of more violent and behaviorally challenged patients. The Hospital is seeing more referrals from correctional facilities, patients requiring competency evaluations and admissions to the unit for Sexually Dangerous Individuals. This particular unit has a small group of patients that are causing the most violence toward staff and other patients. At least one employee in recent memory was hospitalized because of an unprovoked and violent attack by a patient from this unit.

As has been pointed out, when a peace officer, correctional facility employee or medical services personnel are assaulted in their official capacity, the person doing the attack can be charged with a Class C felony. It seems only fair that the employees of the Hospital should be afforded the same protection under the law.

Thank you. I would be happy to answer any questions.